



Arizona Refugee Resettlement Program
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Arizona Department of Economic Security, VISTA

Phoenix & Tucson, Arizona

2012-2013

Federal Legislative District(s): 9 & 27

PROGRAM FAST FACTS

Congressional District(s): 2, 3, & 8
State Legislative District(s): 9 & 27
Service Area by County/City: Maricopa County/Phoenix and Pima County/Tucson
Project Federal Share: \$176,868
Project Local Match: \$55,620
Community Volunteers Recruited: 946
Volunteer Hours Served: 20,000
Value of Volunteer Hours: \$400,000
*2011 Independent Sector Rate for the Value of a Volunteer Hour in Arizona is \$20.08

Community Need

Arizona receives more than 3,000 refugees each year and has been designated by the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement as a high-arrival state. The Arizona Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) is located within the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) administers support for transitional benefits and services to assist refugees' adjustment to life in the U.S. The RRP VISTA project strengthens the capacity of public and private refugee serving agencies to address the many obstacles and challenges refugees face as they reach the goal of self-sufficiency.

Mission

DES promotes the safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency of children, adults, and families. RRP's mission is to support and advance refugees' successful resettlement through the coordination of public and private resources that best enable them and other eligible beneficiaries to be firmly established on the path to success and well-being.

Vision

Every child, adult, and family in the state of Arizona will be safe and economically secure.

Program Activities

The Refugee Resettlement Program serves as an intermediary for Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and places VISTA members with refugee serving partner agencies in Phoenix and Tucson Arizona each year. Assignments in the VISTA Project build capacity through expansion of existing programs or development of new programs and emphasize services to women and families, older refugees and youth.

Program Impact

The RRP VISTA project is entering its sixth year. Nearly 20,000 refugees living in Arizona have been impacted by various VISTA assignments in Maricopa and Pima counties. By providing an umbrella of assistance to many refugee serving agencies, the RRP VISTA grant supports partner agencies with VISTA resources that build capacity, expand awareness and engage volunteer assistance. The VISTA project provides refugees a broader and more comprehensive range of unduplicated assistance and services that relate directly to RRP funded services or to services that address barriers to employment.



Arizona Refugee Resettlement Program VISTA members provide refugees with job training and mock job interviews during the Martin Luther King day of service.

National Priority Area and Program Performance Goals

The RRP VISTA Project sponsors 24 assignments through partnerships with more than 20 refugee serving agencies in Arizona. Agencies that partner with RRP in the VISTA project develop assignments that contribute to refugees' self-sufficiency. Assignments in the project focus on the CNCS key anti-poverty principles of economic development, educational development and healthy futures and include projects such as:

- *The Faith-based Project* – Collaborating with Faith-based Organizations to develop resources and programs for refugees.
- *Early Childhood Development* – Providing pathways for refugee families to access and meaningfully participate in early childhood and development programs.
- *Affordable Care Act Project* – Providing linkages to lead refugee families to health care navigators.
- *Older Refugees Program* – Partnering with mainstream Aging programs to raise awareness of the needs of the older refugees.
- *School Liaison Program* – Developing a database of school mentors that will help refugee families better navigate the U.S. public education system.
- *Childcare and Transportation Project* – Developing resources to address the two most commonly cited reasons for unemployment among refugees.
- *Citizenship Project* – Working with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to develop a clear understanding about the pathway to U.S. Citizenship among refugees.
- *Women's Health Care* – Working with the country health program to strengthen the awareness and connection to refugee women.
- *Job Retention Project* – a Rapid Fire team of seven VISTA members, each assigned to a resettlement agency, who will work for one year to increase the percentage of refugees who retain the first U.S. job after initial resettlement.

Partnerships

The RRP partners with several private and public entities to address the many obstacles and challenges refugees face as they resettle in Arizona. VISTA project assignments encourage strategic connections among participating agencies to foster collaboration and to leverage existing funding in order to expand efforts that lead to refugees obtaining economic self-sufficiency. The RRP has assigned VISTA members with the Arizona State Department of Health, the International Rescue Committee, Refugee Focus in Phoenix and in Tucson, Catholic Charities of Arizona-Phoenix, Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona-Tucson, Arizona Immigrant & Refugees Services, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Maricopa Integrated Health Systems, Pima Community College, LaFrontera Center and various Ethnic Based Community Organizations in Phoenix and Tucson.

History

Congressional passage of the Refugee Act of 1980 (Section 411. [8 U.S.C. 1521]) codified the United States' historic policy of aiding individuals fleeing persecution from their homelands. The purpose of the Federal and Arizona Refugee Resettlement Programs are to effectively resettle refugees and assist them as they obtain economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible after arrival in Arizona. Refugees have been resettling in Arizona since the early 1980's. RRP has received support from CNCS through the AmeriCorps VISTA program since 2009.



Arizona Refugee Resettlement Program VISTA members helping with the 2013 Thanksgiving Day feast for Tucson refugees.